

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

September 13, 2021

His Excellency António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
United Nations Headquarters
405 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017

Dear Secretary-General Guterres:

In light of recent events, we urge you to firmly assert the United Nations' authority to administer and prevent the resettlement of Varosha, pursue the immediate and full implementation of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions on Varosha, and examine sanctions against Turkish and Turkish Cypriot attempts to illegally and unilaterally reopen and resettle this city.

Forty-seven years ago, the Republic of Turkey illegally invaded the Republic of Cyprus. Since then, Cyprus and her people have been divided by Turkey's illegal military occupation. Whether Cypriots speak Greek or Turkish, they all deserve a bright and peaceful future as one Cypriot people free from the artificial divisions imposed upon them by the Republic of Turkey.

During October 2020, Turkish authorities made known their intention to unilaterally reopen Varosha, the fenced off area of Famagusta within Turkish-occupied Cyprus. On October 6, 2020, you emphasized in a statement that "the position of the United Nations on Varosha remains unchanged and is guided by relevant Security Council resolutions" and stressed the "need to avoid any unilateral actions that could trigger tensions on the island and undermine the return to dialogue or the future success of talks." Since your statement, Turkey's unilateral reopening has not abated, and on July 19-20, 2021 President Erdogan declared part of Varosha to be reopened and administered by the illegitimate Turkish administration on Cyprus.

Turkey's reopening of Varosha – a cultural keystone for Cypriots and a city where the return of refugees and the process of rebuilding a modern metropolis can serve as a building block for a reunited Cyprus – clouds the prospects for a peaceful future. Turkey's actions are inconsistent with their prior commitments and disrupts the lawful return of property to those families who were displaced from Varosha during the 1974 invasion. This is a clear violation of UNSC Resolutions 550 (1984) and 789 (1992) which stipulate that Varosha should be transferred to the administration of the United Nations and returned to its lawful inhabitants as a priority, irrespective of the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue. The resolutions further stipulate that Varosha

should be included in the area under the control of UNFICYP; and considers “attempts to settle any part of Varosha by people other than its inhabitants as inadmissible.” All of these parameters have been violated. Furthermore, the Security Council’s Presidential Statement (PRST) 2020/9, UNSC Resolution 2561 in January 2021, PRST 2021/13 on July 23, and most recently UNSC Resolution 2587 on July 29 have clearly and consistently reaffirmed these positions. The United States, the European Union, and Cypriot communities around the world have rightly condemned this illegal action as needlessly enflaming tensions between the communities and hampering prospects for a respectful resolution.

As members of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, we are dismayed but not surprised by President Erdogan’s irresponsible comments rejecting any solution that does not acquiesce to Turkey’s demands to divide Cyprus and her people. We encourage all relevant stakeholders to pursue a solution in line with the various resolutions of the Security Council, but the Republic of Turkey’s consistent provocative behavior demonstrates it is not serious about being a responsible actor in this matter. The recent comments by President Erdogan and Turkey’s continuing occupation and militarization of Cyprus’ territory shows Turkey is unwilling to invest in a solution that respects the rights of the Cypriot people and endangers the peace, security, and stability of the Eastern Mediterranean.

We echo the Biden Administration’s condemnation of the Turkish/Turkish-Cypriot provocations and illegal actions on Varosha and we join our Senate colleagues in calling for multilateral sanctions given this violation of U.N. Security Council Resolutions and defiance of the international community.

We welcome the Security Council’s condemnation of this inadmissible change of status by Turkey and Turkish Cypriots, and we implore you to signal to Turkey that the United Nations will not stop at words if U.N. Security Council Resolutions over Varosha continue to be violated. We want to especially encourage consideration of the Confidence Building Measures over Varosha that have long been put forth by President Anastasiades. We understand that the parties seem further away from formal talks as a result of these illegal Turkish actions, but it is necessary that your efforts continue to advance a just dialogue and eventual peace.

As members of the Hellenic Caucus, we will continue to raise awareness about the plight of the Cypriot people, condemn provocative actions and statements by the Turkish occupiers, and continue the pursuit of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation for the Cypriot people. We will continue to speak out against Turkey’s repugnant policies toward the people of Cyprus and will use our influence within the U.S. Congress to demonstrate that such actions will further isolate Turkey from the global community.

Thank you again for your attention to our letter. We stand ready to work with you on pursuing this solution for a free and unified Cyprus.

Sincerely,

/s/
Carolyn Maloney
Member of Congress

/s/
Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

/s/
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

/s/
John Sarbanes
Member of Congress

/s/
Grace Meng
Member of Congress

/s/
Tom Suozzi
Member of Congress

/s/
Dina Titus
Member of Congress

/s/
William R. Keating
Member of Congress

/s/
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

/s/
Charlie Crist
Member of Congress

/s/
Gus Bilirakis
Member of Congress

/s/
Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

/s/
Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress

/s/
Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress

/s/
Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/
Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

/s/
David Cicilline
Member of Congress

/s/
Theodore Deutch
Member of Congress

/s/
Brad Schneider
Member of Congress

cc: U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield